



September 30, 2015

Dear Aboriginal Affairs Committee Members,

Re: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada recommendations

Our great country of Canada, the traditional territory of the many Aboriginal peoples, is scarred by a deeply unjust chapter in its history - the residential school system. For decades, Aboriginal girls and boys were unjustly taken from their homes and torn from their parents, forced to live in residential schools that would "take the Indian out of them."

Children at residential schools were subject to mental, physical and sexual abuse. They were separated from their siblings. They were not given the same rights as other Canadians. They were punished for speaking their own language. In some cases they were human subjects of scientific experiments.

As many as 150,000 Indian, Métis and Inuit children were sent to residential schools in Canada and the practice continued until the last school closed in 1996. Canada's Aboriginal communities continue to experience the effects of the residential school system as inter-generational trauma haunts families and entire communities.

Governments across Canada have recognized these injustices and endeavoured to take action to begin to heal the wounds they has caused those children who were subject to the residential school system and the generations that have followed.

Canada's Aboriginal community established the Truth and Reconciliation Committee for the purpose of: documenting the impacts of the residential school system; supporting the healing process for survivors, their families and communities; and making recommendations to all orders of government on how to take action to right the wrongs of Canadian history.

While this is an issue experienced nationwide, over 35,000 people who self-identify as Aboriginal call the City of Toronto home and that many Aboriginal peoples in Toronto are dealing with the consequences of inter-generational trauma caused by the residential school system.

The City of Toronto has acknowledged the need for reconciliation by adopting the Statement of Commitment to Aboriginal Communities of Toronto in 2010; creating an Aboriginal employment strategy; creating an Aboriginal education strategy; increasing outreach to the public appointments process and declaring 2014 the year of Truth and Reconciliation.



We recommend that the Aboriginal Affairs Committee recommend that the Executive Committee recommend that:

1. City Council endorse all recommendations in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action.
2. City Council direct that the City Manager, in consultation with the Aboriginal Affairs Committee, develop concrete actions on recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that explicitly recognize the role of municipal government, for approval by City Council.
3. City Council urge the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario to adopt all the recommendations in the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and develop implementation plans in partnership with Canada's Aboriginal communities.

Meegwetch

Frances Sanderson
Executive Director, Nishnawbe Homes

MIKE LAYTON
Toronto City Councillor, Ward 19

Attachment: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action